

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 181118Z JUN 75 ZFD

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4459

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 4353

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

3.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LA, TH

SUBJ: BANNING OF THAI NEWSPAPERS

1. A MINISTER OF INTERIOR ORDER, SIGNED BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERIOR DEUANE SOUNNALATH (LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT) ON JUNE 4 BUT EVIDENTLY MADE PUBLIC ONLY ON JUNE 16, FORBIDS THE IMPORTATION, SALE, POSSESSION OR DISTRIBUTION IN LAOS OF FOUR THAI NEWSPAPERS: THE THAI-LANGUAGE DAILY NEWS, BAN MUONG AND DAILY TIMES, AND THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BANGKOK WORLD.

2. THE MINISTRY GAVE NO REASON FOR THIS DECISION, AND IN THE NEW LAOS NONE IS NECESSARY. (LOCAL DAILIES "XAT LAO" AND "VIENTIANE POST" SPECULATED THAT THE THAI PAPERS HAD PUBLISHED "DISTORTED" NEWS ABOUT LAOS.) PERHAPS DEUANE BELIEVES THAT THE FOUR NEWSPAPERS VIOLATED THE RECENTLY ADOPTED "PROVISIONAL REGULATIONS ON GUARANTEEING DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS OF THE LAO PEOPLE" WHICH IN ARTICLE 20 AND 29 FORBID NEWSPAPERS FROM PUBLISHING NEWS WHICH

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PREJUDICES "THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY"

OR CONTRAVENES "THE LINE OF PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, NEUTRALITY, DEMOCRACY, UNITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE KINGDOM." THE "REGULATIONS" NEVER MADE CLEAR WHO WOULD DECIDE WHEN SUCH PREJUDICE OR CONTRAVENTION OCCURRED. AS SOME MAY HAVE SUSPECTED, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE JUDGE OF SUCH MATTERS WILL BE THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

3. THE DELAY BETWEEN SIGNING AND PUBLICATION OF THE ORDER IS MORE CHARACTERISTIC OF TRADITIONAL LAO BUREAUCRATIC PRACTICE AND SUGGESTS THAT NOT EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED OVERNIGHT.

CHAPMAN

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